



MAY 2015

## The onset of Spring also means the peak of allergy season around the country.

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. Seasonal allergic rhinitis (i.e., hay fever) is usually caused by pollens from trees, grasses, and weeds. Those who are allergic to these small, lightweight, and airborne allergens are likely to suffer in high pollen counts.

The pollen count measures the pollen in the air. Essentially, counts are lower in damp weather and higher in dry,

windy weather. If you have allergies, it is important to monitor pollen counts, and understand how to prepare. During allergy season, TV stations, newspapers, or hospitals often report local pollen counts. In addition, the National Allergy Bureau has pollen count information online, at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

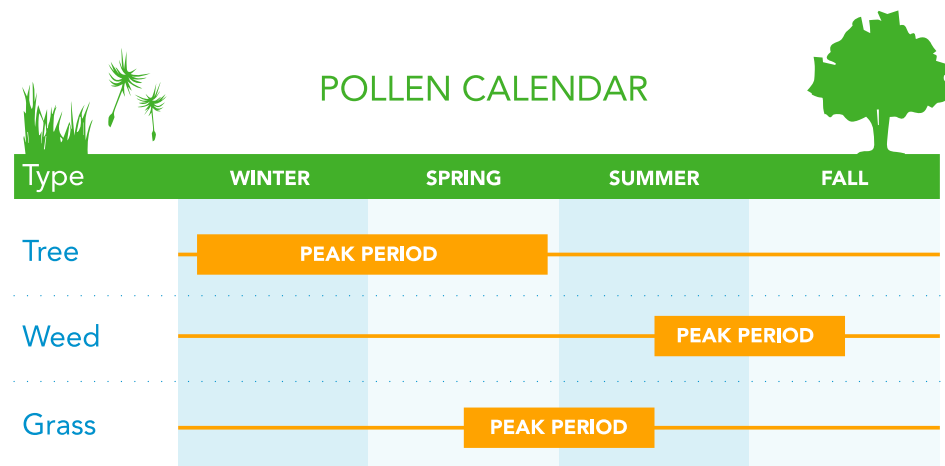
The exact dates of pollen season vary throughout the United States, but in general:

Symptoms of hay fever include sneezing, congestion, and a runny nose. You can help to control these symptoms by avoiding the things that cause them (allergens). If you suffer from seasonal allergies, try these tips to reduce your symptoms:

### TIPS

- Stay inside when pollen levels are high. Pollen counts are generally lowest after sunrise and increase throughout the day. Counts begin to lower around sunset.
- Keep windows and doors closed and use air conditioning to reduce the pollen that gets into your home.
- Avoid bringing pollen back into your home when you go outdoors.
  - Shower and change clothes after being outside.
  - Dry your clothes in a dryer instead of an outdoor clothes line.
- Plan your vacation during peak pollen season, where the plants you are allergic to don't grow.
- Avoid going outside on rainy or windy days when mold spores may be present.

**Resources:** Healthwise; Allergies: Avoiding Outdoor Triggers; March 12, 2014 and Healthwise; Types of Allergens; March 12, 2014



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## Protect Your Skin

May is National Skin Cancer month with more than 3.5 million new cases found each year. Skin cancer is the most common diagnosed cancer in the United States. The great news is that most skin cancers can be prevented.



By using the helpful hints below, you and your family can still enjoy the beautiful Florida Sun.

- Apply sunscreen thoroughly, using the acronym BEENS to check oft-forgotten spots: back of knees, ears, eye area, neck and scalp.
- Use a PABA-free “hypoallergenic” sunscreen providing UVA and UVB protection.

### To protect your own skin from harmful rays, use the tips below:

- Avoid sun tanning and the use of tanning beds.
- Use the “shadow rule”: when your shadow is shorter than you, the UV rays are most intense.
- Apply sunscreen liberally and let it dry about 30 minutes before exposure.
- Water proof sunscreen wears off in about 80 minutes in water, and water resistant lasts 40 minutes.
- Buy clothing treated with chemicals to protect against UV rays.
- Wear sunglasses that filter both UVA and UVB rays.
- The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends SunGuard, a laundry additive that adds UV-30 protection.
- Wear a wide 4 inch brim hat that covers your neck, ears, eyes, and scalp.
- Protect yourself, even on cloudy days.
- Use caution in water, snow, and sand, which reflect damaging rays and increase sunburn risk.

Reference: WebMD.com

## Bringing Wellness Home

### Need help getting your family around the dinner table?

Gathering around the table for a meal may actually change your family's overall health and wellness. In fact, studies show children and teens who regularly sit down to eat with the family are less likely to overeat and/or become overweight, more likely to make healthy food choices, and less likely to have an eating disorder. It may seem impossible to get the family together at the same time, but it's not if you make it a priority. Start small, be flexible and forget perfection.

Here are some tips to help you succeed:

- **Keep it Simple:** It doesn't matter that it's not an elaborate or fancy meal.
- **Be Creative:** Family meals don't always have to be dinner.
- **Plan Ahead:** Make a weekly meal plan, and design your grocery list from the plan to save time.
- **Make it Fun:** Ditch the table, and 'picnic' in the living room or outside in nice weather.
- **Make it Educational:** Think of your kitchen as a classroom. Math concepts, temperature, taste, smells, textures, spelling, culture, and teamwork can all be taught in the kitchen!



- **Share the Responsibility:** Include the family in planning, shopping for and preparing meals. Everyone wins!

**Resources:** Today's Dietitian, 2013 and American Heart Association

## Change the way you eat—and change your life!

If eating right, understanding food labels, measuring portions and counting calories is adding confusion to your diet, you'll want to attend this exciting nutrition program from Florida Blue!

Proven to improve eating habits, Nutritious You is a 5-week program that teaches you how to:

- Shop healthy on a budget
- Read and understand food labels
- Cook healthier
- Eat better to stress less and much more!

This program has been proven to change eating habits and engage participants. Nutritious You includes hands-on experiences to make healthy eating easier. You'll receive a free gift when you attend 4 out of 5 Nutritious You 60-minute sessions, which will be held Mondays at 10 a.m. in the following Retail Center locations throughout Florida: Jacksonville – Town Center; Pensacola; Tallahassee; Tampa; Winter Park; Winter Haven; Sarasota; Fort Myers; Palm Beach; Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

Join us, it's free! Seating is limited to the first 25 registered participants. You must be 18 years or older to participate. Register online at [floridabluecenters.com](http://floridabluecenters.com) or call 1-877-FL-BLUE-0

- Session # 1 June 1st
- Session # 2 June 8th
- Session # 3 June 15th
- Session # 4 June 22nd
- Session # 5 June 29th

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AND  
HEALTHY

RECIPE  
OF THE  
MONTH

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## Strawberry Yogurt Parfait

This healthy yogurt parfait recipe combines fresh fruit, Greek yogurt and crunchy granola for an easy breakfast. Pack the parfait in a mason jar for a healthy breakfast on the go.

**Makes:** 1 serving

**Serving Size:** about 1 1/2 cups

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup granola

### Preparation:

1. Combine strawberries and sugar in a small bowl and let stand until the berries start to release juice, about 5 minutes.
2. To assemble parfait, layer yogurt and the strawberries with their juice in a 2-cup container. Top with granola.

### Tips & Notes

Assemble the parfait up to 2 hours ahead.

**Nutrition:** Per serving: 285 calories; 8 g fat (1 g sat, 3 g mono); 6 mg cholesterol; 37 g carbohydrates; 7 g added sugars; 22 g total sugars; 17 g protein; 6 g fiber; 50 mg sodium; 577 mg potassium.

All nutrition information is based on nutritional averages for ingredients listed.

Recipe courtesy of Eatingwell.com



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